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College to replace Battell with new first-year dorm

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Staff Writer

Battell Hall, completed in 1955 and home to more than 250 first years each year, is known for its reputation as the most social first-year dorm, its bathtubs, and its ivy-covered facade. The residential hall, often considered a rite of passage by students, is also infamous for its outdated features and lack of lounges or study rooms. With this in mind, the administration plans to start construction on a new first-year dorm that will eventually replace Battell on the north side of Battell Beach, with plans to break ground as early as September.

The new Battell will be four stories tall and house up to 284 students, close to half of the typical first-year class. Current designs for the facade of the hall resemble other buildings on campus, and the residence hall's interior will feature lounges and shared spaces — amenities the current Battell lacks. It will also be built in accordance with principles of universal accessibility, according to David Provost, executive vice president for finance and administration.

The new Battell was designed with student input, and members of the Student Government Association (SGA) sat in on meetings and shared ideas for dorm improvement. Karina Martir '24, SGA first-year senator, said that she advocated for more natural light, study spaces and lounge spaces for activities like ping pong tables. Additionally, the college gathered input from Residential Life.

Once construction begins, Provost estimated that it would take about 18 months to complete, and the earliest students could move into the new Battell would be January 2023.

Since last summer, much of Battell Beach has been fenced off for the excavation and rerouting of steam pipes. According to Provost some of the recently rerouted steam pipes would be impacted by the construction of the new Battell and would need to be relocated again, but this movement

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LOCAL

Addison County leads the state in vaccination rate

By FLORENCE WU
Staff Writer

Addison County is the leading county in the leading state for Covid-19 vaccination rates, with 81% of people having received their first dose of the vaccine in Addison County. In Vermont, 71.8% of the population has received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Massachusetts and New Hampshire follow Vermont in vaccination rates, with 62.8% and 60.1% of their respective populations having received their first dose. At the other extreme, Mississippi has the lowest vaccination rate (only 32.8% of their population has received their first dose), with Louisiana second-lowest and Alabama third-lowest, according to the CDC.

Infection rates in Vermont have plummeted 39% since April 1, according to a statement made by Mike Pieciak, commissioner of the Department of Financial Regulation, in a press conference last month. Deaths and hospitalizations related to the virus have also declined.

Ruth Hardy, a state senator from Addison County, credits the success to public health outreach, effective leadership, vaccination site accessibility and — most importantly — public trust and engagement.

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College struggles to fill low-wage dining and facilities positions

By IDEAL DOWLING
Local Editor

The college is struggling to fill low-wage positions in Dining and Facilities Services — a task many employers have faced this year, sparking a national debate over hiring difficulties and its alleged relation to unemployment benefits. The challenges follow more than a year after student-organized protests for higher staff wages, calls from faculty to address wage compression and requests for higher prioritization of staff needs in budget planning.

Positions in the skilled trades areas of Facilities Services have been open for anywhere between one to six months without attracting qualified candidates, according to Director of Facilities Services Mike Moser.

Likewise, Executive Director of Food Service Operations Dan Detora told The Campus that, despite having seven openings in the department for most of the semester, there have been only one or two applicants at any given time.

Ross Dining Hall currently has two open cook jobs, one of which has been empty since August 2020 and the other since January 2021. Atwater Dining Hall has been looking to hire a line cook for a few weeks without a single interested applicant, according to Ian Martin, Atwater Commons chef manager.

"This is kind of unusual. There have been times we've gotten a few applicants and they're not qualified, and other times we get a lot of applicants, but this time there's really been no applicants at all for this duration," said Chris Laframboi-

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Ross Dining Hall has had two open positions for several months without any applicants.

SPORTS

Bill Beaney, five-time NESCAC Coach of the Year, reflects on 35 years of coaching

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Contributing Writer

Bill Beaney has coached at Middlebury since the fall of 1986, overseeing four different programs and winning numerous accolades. Beginning as the men's hockey and women's soccer coach, Beaney maintained these roles for nearly a decade. In 1994, he stepped down as the women's soccer coach and began coaching the men's golf program, which he still coaches today.

Dissatisfied with the gender inequity in golf, Beaney set out to create a women's program in 1999, coaching the team for several years before finding a more permanent coach. He continued to work with the men's golf and hockey programs until 2015, when he stepped down from his hockey post to focus solely on the golf team.

Coaching vastly different sports may appear difficult to some, Beaney doesn't see it that way.

"You have the skill piece obviously — you do have to be comfortable teaching certain skills for each sport," Beaney acknowledged. "But other than that, it's really about figuring out how to get to know the players you're dealing with, how to get the best out of them, and how to help them reach their full potential."

Beaney has done just that with his teams, securing nine NESCAC championships as head coach of the men's golf program. When he was first ap-

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College tackles multi-year anti-racism and DEI action plan

By HANNAH BENSEN
Editor at Large

Since the 1960s, Middlebury has conducted intermittent diversity climate assessments every six to seven years, according to Chief Diversity Officer Miguel Fernández. The most recent of these initiatives is the Action Plan for Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a multi-year plan published in September by the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (OIDEI).

OIDEI began writing the plan in fall of 2019 and circulated the plan to key stakeholders in the spring. Like many of its predecessors, publication of the 2020 Action Plan followed a discrete campus or national event: in this case, the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolisis police officer last summer, which set off a fresh wave of protests about racial justice and equity in communities around the country.

The plan is ambitious in both objective and scope, aiming to "identify and implement strategies that will engage the entire campus community in the work of fostering greater access, equity, inclusion, and full participation for Middlebury students, staff, and faculty."

Though Fernández and Directory of Equity and Inclusion Renee Wells spearheaded the Action Plan, they consulted numerous constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, administration, trustees, committees and alumni. They also looked at nearly two dozen reports, assessments and data to identify the institutional barriers that are mentioned in the report. From the feedback they received, the original plan underwent several iterations of revision.

"Diversity plans often present lofty goals but lack specificity and strategy and therefore lead to 'diversity clutter' with a host of disconnected initiatives," reads the Action Plan. To avoid these usual pitfalls and increase accountability, the Plan is broken into five foci: Faculty and Staff; Students; Fostering and Restoring Community; Accessibility; and Transparency and Accountability. For each of the 61 initiatives described, the Action Plan details the responsible units, a proposed timeline and a measure of accountability which delegates the responsibilities of the initiative.

Still, the Action Plan introduction specifies the document should be viewed as a "roadmap," not a "mandate." When asked to confirm if strategies in the Plan would definitely be accomplished, Fernández acknowledged that fiscal realities as well as student and faculty initiatives could slightly shift the Plan's approach. Wells said that the timeline may accommodate strategies as they become financially feasible.

"Our goal is that all of this gets accomplished and more," Fernández said.

This Middlebury Campus investigation reports on the progress of the initiatives in the Action Plan with a particular focus on those with a proposed timeline of the 2020-2021 academic year. This project is split into five sections — one for each the Action Plan — and is the product of dozens of interviews with staff, students, committees and administrators.

"The United States of America has not solved racism or issues of equity and inclusion in 200- plus years. I do not expect Middlebury will resolve it in five years," said Fernandez in an interview with The Campus. "So I'm sure there is going to be plenty of work to do in five years, [but] I hope we'll be in a much better place."

Visit middleburycampus.com to read the five-part series by Hannah Bensen, Abigail Chang, Lily Jones, Sophia McDermott-Hughes and Roya Touran.

After a year of the AAUP, progress, challenges and approaching horizons

By JAKE GAUGHAN
News Editor

A year ago, on May 14, 2020, Middlebury College faculty members reinstated the Middlebury chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which by then had been dormant for a few years. Born out of budget austerity concerns, the group of faculty and staff are "dedicated to making sure employees have a seat at the table when the institution makes decisions that effect [sic] us all."

Initially, the chapter's membership consisted of a 60-person email list; now, President of the Middlebury AAUP Laurie Essig, professor of gender, sexuality and feminist studies, estimates that there are over 200 members of the group, consisting of faculty and staff from both the College and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

"We as a community need to take care of each other," Essig said in an interview with the Campus.

Essig synthesized the impetus behind the AAUP's current work. "When we have staff members, who are risking their lives to be frontline workers, and not earning enough money to eat, that's a problem. When

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NEWS

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Reslife adds special interest houses, off-campus permission ahead of enrollment increase
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The People's Kitchen Fuels Vermont Workers Center
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Liveable is the minimum: The college should prioritize paying livable staff wages
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Michael McCormack '20 wraps up successful year with University of Vermont men's lacrosse
By BLAISE SIEFER